LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN THE CONTEMPORARY PERADIGM OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Collection of Aticales

Yerevan
“Lusikn”
2012
ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ПԵՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆ
ԱՆԳԼԻԱԿԱՆ ԲԱՆՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ
ԱՄԲԻՈՆ ԱՆԳԼԵՐԵՆԻ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԱՍՈՑԻԱՑԻԱ 
ԼԵԶՈՒՆ ԵՎ ԳՐԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ
ԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ԻՄԱՑՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԻՑ ՀԱՐԱՑՈՒՅՑՈՒՄ
Գիտական հոդվածների ժողովածու
Հեթանոսության տարբերակ

4

Հատվածումները են 161-165 էջեր

Հրատարակչություն՝ ՊԻՄ

“Գիտական ՊՀ”
2012
ON SOME LINGUISTIC AND EXTRA-LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF FOOTBALL COMMENTARIES

It is common knowledge that the 21st century is the century of sport. The significance of sport communication consists in the fact that sport is an enormous sphere of human activity that includes various problems - social, political, financial, etc. Due to mass media - press, radio, television - milliards of people are involved into sports communication. Especially important is the role of television that makes the spectators participants of the sporting event.

Most television programmes are not easily categorized into one or another television genre. The borderlines between programme formats are often fluid, and categories tend to overlap. For this reason, many articles and treatises on television start out with a definition of the kind of programme or genre to be discussed, A good share of the texts on the subject do not address the question of what precisely television sport is, or how this particular kind of television programme or genre differs from other kinds of programmes and genres. Perhaps because what television sport is, seems as obvious as the question is banal, For, even if one may often be in doubt as to the genre a given programme belongs to, few if any have trouble deciding whether or not they are watching sport. In fact, of televised sport is the fact that what passes across the screen seems to proceed so "naturally", is so self-evident, that it seldom raises any major questions.

As far as sports communication includes a whole spectrum of genres, the process of presenting sporting events are characterized by different degrees of verbalization depending on a number of extra-linguistic factors among which the following can be mentioned:

1. The type of the sporting event: the sport commentary of a football or hockey match will certainly differ from the commentary of a horse racing or billiards which is accounted first of all by the nature of the sporting event itself;

2. The channel of the commentary: the commentary on television will certainly from the radio commentary due to the presence of the visual element in the channel and its absence in the latter one;
3. The degree of personal involvement and experience of the commentator;

4. The importance of the event: the less important the event is the less impressive and involved the commentary will be;

5. The phase of the sporting event commented. The speech of the commentator depending on the situation in the sporting event, Comparatively static moments in the game are accompanied by a detailed description of the weather, the participants, the place of the event, etc. The more dynamic climax moment, his speech becomes more capacious and the verbal information acquires conversational features;

6. The style of the commentary depends on whether it is a live sporting event commentary or a post sporting event one when the results of the game are already known.

7. The number of commentators: there may be a single commentator who comments on any stage of the sporting event or two commentators one of whom usually narrates the event stage by stage and the other is an "expert" who provides comments and opinions.

The comparison of two football comments by the same commentators on the radio and television proved that is a higher word count in a radio commentary compared to one on television, and the difference is quite marked. Lappin’s comparative analysis showed that there was over double amount of words in the radio commentary compared to the television one. The radio commentary contains more words primarily because it has to describe everything as the listener cannot see the events that are taking place. But also because if there is nobody speaking on the radio, what is the point in listening to the radio?

Thus, silence is anathema on the radio (Lappin 2000:13).

Meanwhile, on television, the commentators can allow themselves to be quiet for a short period of time, as the viewer is still aware of what is happening in the match. This is often welcomed by the viewer. However, on the radio it is imperative, that this does not happen and that is why there are three commentators on the radio compared to one or two on the television. In the case of the television commentaries there are numerous occasions in which there are pauses in the speech.
The main difference between television and radio commentary is that whilst the television viewer can see what is happening, the radio listener cannot. Therefore the radio commentator must provide everything that is necessary for understanding and enjoyment, using only words. According to Frecborn (1986:126), "Although commentators have individual styles, they have a great deal in common in their use of English, which is why unscripted commentary can be described as a variety of spoken English".

The general strategy is reflected in the specific features of vocabulary, syntactic structures and the last but not the least in the prosodic arrangement of the commentary. Among the lexical characteristics of sports commentaries terminology, phraseology of metaphorical character can be mentioned. Any attempt at describing the language of sports commentary should perhaps first mention the kind of vocabulary that is used. Any vocabulary that immediately suggests some field of activity, is termed in linguistic field specific.

A further characteristic of commentary is the way in which clauses are linked together. A very small number of conjunctive elements are used to link clauses together, often rather loosely. There are some cases when the complex sentences are managed completely which usually identifies a different phase in the commentary. Grammatical characteristics include elliptical and inverted sentences, rhetorical and anticipating questions.

Sport commentaries on different sporting events share a number of characteristics, but there are also some important differences accounted for by some extra-linguistic factors.

David Cristal distinguishes two separate forms of commentary naming them “play-by-play” commentary and the "colour-adding" commentary. He defines "colour-adding" as "pre-event background, post-event evaluation, and within-event interpretation". In contrast "play-by-play" is the method used to describe actual events that are happening as the commentator sees them, the narration (Crystal 1999:358). Any football commentary performs four functions: narrating — describing what is happening play-by-play; evaluating — giving opinions about play, players, team, referee decision; elaborating — giving background information about team and player records, the ground, the crowd, speculating on motives and thoughts of the players; summarizing — giving an overview of the game so far.
The mentioned utterance functions can be split into two broad types, both of which relate to phases of the commentary, Narration is composed of time-critical utterances, which occur at the time of-play and serve to describe it. These form the structure of the commentary and are central to describing what is going on, a function, most viewers and listeners would agree to be the primary purpose of live commentary. The other kinds of utterance tend to occur in less frenetic parts of the game, and consist of more subjective content: evaluating, elaborating, and summarizing are of this nature. Utterances with these functions tend to be more syntactically complete and complex, and are regularly cut short when the game starts up and time-critical commentary is again required. The switch between the two utterance types is often marked by speaker change: as mentioned before, football coverage often has two commentators, one of whom is only called upon to evaluate and give background in slower parts of the game. In addition, change of tense often occurs: evaluation and summary are more frequently given in the past tense, while time-critical commentary is given in the present.

The most important feature of the sport commentary is the absence of the feedback with the addressee. The commentator has no opportunity to transform his speech tactics-taking into account the viewers' reaction, he can only be directed by his own experience and intuition.

The language of the football commentary is characterized by a subject specific vocabulary. The following list of words from the commentaries related to football, but not all of them are exclusive to football: foul, cross, far side, goal, goalkeeper, leftside, premiership, team names, stadium, header, season, throw-in, manager names, play-offs, forwards etc.

Set phrases, or collocations, are included, since they often link two or more common words together to provide a technical term: the words free and kick have many uses in ordinary speech and writing, but put together as free kick in the context of a football match form a lexical item with a special meaning. Other examples of collocation include the following: European Cup, football league, penalty area, whistle blow, yellow card, go head-to-head, etc.

Both components of a collocation, when separated into their original words, have a separate meaning to that of when they are joined together. When put together in the text of football, they form a lexical item with a meaning particular to football.
Indeed many of the player and place names are also "context bound". For example, "England" and "Chelsea" do not unconditionally refer to the football sides, without knowing the context they could relate to any number of things.

Although it would appear that television commentators use plainer English, it is not necessarily true, but for most of the time, television commentators use a "common register". Commentators also regularly use metaphors to add excitement to their commentary and bring the viewer deeper into the game. This is evidently less important on television because even if the commentators do not establish a rapport with the audience, they will never lose interest and switch off as far as they can see and judge everything themselves. There are many examples of this, including; "Belgium mop it up nicely" (a domestic metaphor) and "net bound" (a navigational metaphor). These examples are very vivid and add life to the commentary. However, if overused they can degenerate into dead metaphors or cliches, because their original meanings are lost.

Because commentaries are descriptions of events as they are happening, commentators normally use the present simple and present continuous tenses. In “play-by-play” commentary the commentator describes what is going on as lie speaks. Therefore, he tends to use the simple present tense a lot: Fabrigas throws Nasri; Now they play the danger. When referring back to an incident that has just happened the commentator normally uses the simple past tense: Van Percic tried to show his classic still again. The present tense is used far more often than the past tense. Not only does the commentator do this because lie is describing events as they happen, but it also adds drama, life and excitement to the viewing experience.

One of the grammatical characteristics of the TV commentary is the way in which clauses are linked together. A very small number of conjunctive elements are used to link clauses together, often rather loosely. And, but, so are seldom used. As is somewhat different, since it serves to introduce a subordinate clause: Terrific cross, giving back Ronaldo, his play [pause] but jumps off the line and now one minute ...

In radio and television broadcasting, you will often hear exclamations of excitement. The commentators use a number of exclamatory sentences expressing their emotions concerning the
game, sentences with the inverted word order, e.g. *Well, aesthetic play go here! It's not easy, no, not! That's it!*

During the commentary on the match, we cannot see how the expert and the commentator are interacting with one another directly. We cannot therefore speculate on gazes and gestures that are used (although it would be possible to analyze the non-verbal cues that take place in the panel-style discussions at half-time, for example). In the football data, though, we can examine linguistic cues for turn taking.

Another noticeable feature of a football commentary is the use of metaphors. Metaphors are used to describe the actions of individual players as well as the game itself and its changes. Thus, a player can "tame the ball", a game can be played "in the final weeks of the campaign", and if a team finds "their hopes of survival diminishing" they can make a "last stand". Another aspect of how metaphor can help our understanding is that it can fill lexical gaps. If there is no appropriate word available for describing a concept, a metaphor can serve instead. For instance, in the domain of football, a defender is a player who tries to keep the opposing team from scoring. Another function of metaphor is to express emotion.

Metaphors used in sports commentary turn out to be of several different kinds. The following three source domains are particularly prominent, i.e. physical fight, military conflict and animal behavior: *physical fight* (players punch clear of one another, one team wrestles the title off another, first blood goes to one team, a player plunges a dagger into the other teams' hiart); military conflict (a match is a battle, the midfield is a battle zone that can be occupied, after the battle, the dust settles on the field, a player can miss the goal point-blank), etc.

Metaphors are in fact picked from a wide variety of fields, for instance finance (*a player can reduce the arrears*), arguments (*a player has the last word, or wins a battle of wits*) and many others. However, none of these source domains seem to have contributed such a sheer amount of metaphors as those mentioned above (Gunell 2009:7). Metaphors seem to be used for several different purposes, but primarily to describe action taking place in the game.

Thus, football television broadcasting has distinct language forms that means it can therefore be "described as a variety of spoken English". Football commentary on the television has a number
of features which allows it to convey an appropriate sense of action. This is chiefly because of the high degree of fluency it maintains due to its formulaic language and omitting of unessential words. The television, medium also uses a "non-register", which is based on a specific lexicon. Furthermore, commentators on television revolve around "colour-adding", which is critical in an uneventful match. Yet it quickly disappears as soon as the game becomes eventful again.

The commentator on television can afford using a lot of "colour-adding". However, the most significant finding is that football commentary in general is a distinctive English language. A TV football commentary is a monologue or dialogue-on-stage directed at an unknown, unseen, heterogeneous mass audience who voluntarily choose to listen and watch and provide no feedback to the speaker. Therefore, the real stage football commentary itself.

References